Learner Centered Teaching

HELPING STUDENTS TO BE ACTIVE LEARNERS

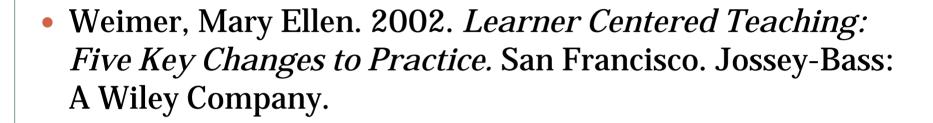**EVE CHAMBERS**
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Sources

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  - Maurice, Keith. 1994. "The Fluency Workshop," in *New Ways in Teaching Speaking.* Bailey, Kathleen and Savage, Lance, editors. Alexandria, VA; Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)

Principles of Learner Centered Teaching

- 1. The Balance of Power
- 2. The Function of Content
- 3. The Role of the Teacher
- 4. The Responsibility for Learning
- 5. Evaluation Purpose and Processes

1. The Balance of Power

- Students and teachers share power.

Power = Energy

The Balance of Power (cont.)

- "Education's role is to challenge human inequality and dominant myths rather than socialize students into the status quo."

2. The Function of Content

- ## Surface learning

  Texts are a flat landscape of facts to be remembered –

- ## Deep learning

  Texts are an area dotted with salient features representing priniciples or arguments around which there are plains of evidence.

  Ramsden

The Function of Content (cont.)

"Learning should be seen as a **qualitative** change in a person's way of seeing …

rather than as a **quantitative** change in the amount of knowledge someone posses"

Ramsden

3. The Role of the Teacher

- "From Sage on the Stage

  to

  Guide on the Side"

- Teacher as coach, maestro, guide.

- "The Teacher as Mountaineer learns to connect. The guide rope links mountain climbers together so that they may assist one another in the ascent. The teacher makes a 'rope' by using the oral and written contributions of the students...and by connecting the course material with the lives of students."

4. The Responsibility for Learning

- Students must accept the responsibility for their own learning. They need
  - Intellectual maturity
  - Learning skills
  - Awareness to function as autonomous learners
- Many students lack confidence in themselves as learners and do not make responsible learning decisions

Ten Commandments
for Effective Study Skills

1. Thou shalt be responsible and Thou shalt be active—for there is no other passage to academic success.

2. Thou shalt know where thy "hot buttons" are, and thou shalt push them regularly.

3. If thou hast questions, asketh them. If thou hast no questions, maketh some!

4. Thou shalt learn that thou and thy professor maketh a team—and thou shalt be a team player!

5. Thou shalt not park thy body in the back!

Ten Commandments (continued)

6. Though shalt not write in thy notes what thou faileth to understand!

7. If thine interest in class be gone, faketh it!

8. Though shalt know that if silence be golden—recitation shalt be platinum!

9. Thou shalt know that cram is a four-letter word!

10. Thou shalt not procrastinate—and thou shalt begin not doing it right now!

5. Evaluation Purpose and Processes

- In learner-centered teaching, faculty still evaluate and grade student work, but evaluation activities that involve students are included in the process.

  - Students learn how to assess their own work and participate in the evaluation of work done by their peers. These self- and peer- assessment activities develop skills that independent learners need.

Grading System

- Give opportunities for students to participate in grading by doing self and peer evaluation (see sample evaluation sheets on handout)

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Student centered topics

Sample exercise: CLASS EXPERTS

Instructions to student:

1. Think of something you are good at doing. It can be anything except work/school. For example, dancing, playing basketball, cooking, painting, singing, etc.
2. When you are ready, come up and write the thing/things on the "Our Class Experts" chart.

Class Experts, continued

- Students prepare a speech
- Students practice speech with partner
- A few students give speeches to the class each day

Self and peer evaluation

- "Round Robin" speaking activity
  - 4 students speak simultaneously)
  - 4 rounds

Speaking Activity-Round 1

- 4 students are assigned to give speeches. They are numbered 1-4 and stand in the four corners of the room.
- Class (audience) members count off from 1-4.
- Audience members sit around their speaker (1-4)
- Teacher gives each listener an "Audience Feedback" form
- Speakers are given 5 minutes to speak about their topic.
- After 5 minutes, speakers stop. Audience gets 1 minute to ask questions and then 1 more minute to fill out the "Audience Feedback Form."
- Audience moves to the next speaker.

Speaking activity, Round 2

- This time, when everyone is seated, tell the speakers that they will have **4 minutes** to speak about their topic.

- Have them speak for exactly **4 minutes**. Stop and give the audience 1 minute to ask questions and then 1 more minute to fill out the evaluation form.

- Tell the audience to move on to the next speaker.

Speaking activity, Round 3

- This time, when everyone is seated, tell the speakers that they will have **3 minutes** to speak about their topic.

- Have them speak for exactly **3 minutes**. Stop and give the audience 1 minute to ask questions and then 1 more minute to fill out the evaluation form.

- Tell the audience to move on to the next speaker.

Speaking activity, Round 4

- This time, when everyone is seated, tell the speakers that they will have **2 minutes** to speak about their topic.

- Have them speak for exactly 2 **minutes**. Stop and give the audience 1 minute to ask questions and then 1 more minute to fill out the evaluation form.

- Tell the audience to move on to the next speaker.

Speaking Activity--Feedback

- Collect all the evaluation papers from the audience. Tell the speakers they can have 1more day to do their self-evaluations.

- In the end, the final grade is based on information from 3 sources:
  - Teacher's evaluation of speeches
  - Peer evaluations of speeches
  - Student's self-evaluation of speech
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Study Group Bill of Rights for Individual Members

- You have the right and the responsibility to select study sites and times that are convenient for all members.

- You have the right to contribute to the formation of group goals that have measureable outcomes and deadlines.

- You have the responsibility to be an active participant, not a passive receiver, in the group process. In addition, you have the right to expect active participation from other group members.

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- You have the right to have meetings begin and end promptly and to participation in study sessions without needless interruptions.

- You have the right to participation in a group that works cooperatively and handles disagreements constructively.

- You have the right to expect that the group will stay on task and you have the responsibility for helping them do so.

- You have the right to ask group members to limit socialization or discussion of extraneous topics before and after study sessions.

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- You have the right to closure. This includes feelings of accomplishment

    1. At the end of each study session, by evaluating if the group has met its goals.

    2. After each exam and assignment, by debriefing with members to evaluate performances

    3. At the end of the class by assessing the value of the group experience to you.

Focus on learners

- Learning styles
  - Do an inventory to find out what they are
  - Include a variety of activities to appeal to various styles

  Personalized lesson material
  - Use students' expertise (see "experts" exercise)
  - "Family" exercise: tea and talk
  - Student to student interaction
- Student to student interaction
  - Collaborative projects with final reports